

VOICES

de la
Luna

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Featured Poet: Ken Fontenot

Featured Interview: Lisha Garcia

C.L. "Rooster" Martinez, "Recetas (Salsa Verde)"

Clemonce Heard, "Little Signal"

More recently, you have studied poetic medicine and sought to learn how to use it as a tool of wellness. Tell us about that and what attracted you to this discipline.

I was at the AWP conference here in San Antonio and attended a panel on “Writing the Difficult.” Some of the panelists read horrific stories of rape and domestic violence. The academic response to these topics was, and I quote, “We are not here to look at the content of the piece but rather look as to whether the stories work as literature.”

I was appalled. How can a woman write about a rape and not have the incident matter beyond grammar and literary value!? Honestly, I don’t believe that you can separate the content of a piece from the structure of a piece. The writers were told to seek mental help elsewhere. I found this to be very cold and not empathetic at all.

Shortly thereafter, I heard Cyra Dumitru read at Barnes & Noble. She mentioned that she was completing her certification in poetic medicine. She put me in contact with the Institute of Poetic Medicine, and I began the 3-year journey of certification. The entire premise is about how to use poetry as a healing modality. Content matters more than form. Many writers from my group went through a year of poetic medicine with me. Also, since the onset of COVID, I co-facilitated a poetic medicine group called Poets in Exile with the late Dr. James Brandenburg. The group will continue in his honor, and *Voices de la Luna* has already indicated that it will continue to publish the poetic medicine poems of the group. (See pp. 20-21 for a tribute to James Brandenburg - ed.)

Do you enjoy performance poetry in front of an audience?

I love it. I only wish, when hearing it, that I had a written copy to go along, as sometimes it goes too fast for me to capture all the power of the lines.

Can you comment on how poetry is taught in our schools?

The poetry taught in our schools is often not reflective of today’s life experience for young people. It’s up to us to make a path to its approachability for people of all ages. And no, it doesn’t have to rhyme, and yes, it can cover the entire gamut of human experience. I think if young people are exposed at an early age to the relevance poetry can bring to our lives, their life experience will be richer. The William Carlos Williams quote always comes to mind: “It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there.”

If you had no time or money restrictions, what poetry-related project would you undertake for yourself or for the benefit of our city?

Without the restrictions of time and money, I would dedicate a good part of my life to writing and doing poetic medicine workshops with different communities. Poetic medicine is a gentle healing modality that everyone can benefit from. My dream would be to use poetic medicine as a tool with the refugee communities, women in shelters, women facing domestic violence, and with teens and college students trying to overcome their personal backgrounds and achieve academic or personal success.

Poetry

Love’s Awakening

Diane Raab

What began as an urge to have you,
something primal and needy
turned into a wanting to be one with you.

I blossomed at your fingertips,
I lost myself in your wet kisses
with soft and firm way you held me

walking through the parking lot
to our cars, your grasp which told me
you promised to never let go.

I opened myself to you
like a lily when daylight arrives
and closed up when night sprung forth.

Behind our closed doors,
your manly motions warmed me,
all your movements of love

and how you gave me pleasure—
careful strokes about my body
as I became more vulnerable
under your sacred spell.

Like a rhythmic dance
our bodies became a delicious delight
of magic as I watched
your joy meet mine

underneath our moonlight
which together we watched settle
so many more times
in a lifetime we were never able to share.



At the Père Lathuille Restaurant
Édouard Manet